

THE YOGA OF THE PLANETS

KETU, THE SOUTH NODE

ANDREW FOSS, PHD



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HOW THIS BOOK WILL HELP YOU

This book has many uses. In itself, it is a meditation. There is no need to know anything about Vedic Astrology to enjoy and benefit. There are insights into astrology but the main focus is enlightening the consciousness and providing a rebalancing of the energies represented by the planets. This will happen automatically as one reads the mantras and their commentaries.

There are 108 mantras for each planet used in Vedic Astrology. Each mantra is a descriptive name converted to a salutation and used for meditation or chanting. For example 'om śāntāya namaḥ' means 'salutations to the peaceful one' and is based on the name śānta (shaanta) which means peaceful. Reciting the mantra develops understanding for the quality embodied in the name and can help mental clarity and spiritual development. In the translation, the first mantra of each planet is fully translated. After that, just the names are translated leaving 'Salutations to' understood.

The Vedic planets are normally listed in the order of the days of the week. They are the Sun, the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn plus the two eclipse points. These are the Lunar nodes called Rāhu (the North node) and Ketu (the South node). The Vedic 'planets' are often referred to as 'Grahas', the Sanskrit word which means 'graspers', as they appear to guide and control our experiences.

For the first time, these mantras are listed with translation and commentary. Even if you only read the commentaries, you will get some of the benefit. If the planet is weak or afflicted in your life, then this acts as a remedy. If it is already strong, this helps to enliven its full value.

A common way of using these mantras is to recite the set of 108 for the planet one chooses¹. For example, one could recite the mantras of the Sun on Sunday mornings. The next chapter, *Find your Personal Mantras*, will explain how to go beyond this and find out which of the mantras will especially enliven your personal chart.

The mantras of the more malefic planets, such as Mars, Saturn, Rāhu and Ketu, naturally contain some names, which describe the more challenging side of the Graha. These help us to understand certain behaviours and this can be remedial. For these names, it may be better to contemplate the deeper meanings rather than simply repeating them. For example, Rāhu is said to be cruel. This association with cruelty arises out of fear. Fear is deeply seated in survival issues.

Contemplating the mantra may help one get in touch with the source of the problem, so it can be alleviated. Loving an injured heart can be the basis of real change. This applies to our self or another. I do not recommend using the more challenging names as regular practice

mantras and I certainly do not recommend you ask another person to do them even if they come up when you do the calculations described in the next chapter. On the other hand, I have found listening to the sets of 108 names has been beneficial for my clients.

If chanting one or a set of mantras, I suggest you start with

om gaṁ gaṇapataye namaḥ

to invoke the pure state of mind and end with

om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

meaning ‘Om peace, peace, peace’.

For convenience, I am publishing the mantras of the nine planets of Vedic Astrology in nine separate eBooks. Put together, the length was too great but I am combining them all in the printed version. To find the eBook for another planet, visit YogaOfThePlanets.com. There you can also find information on the audio of the recitation of the mantras. I have on occasion given these to clients to listen to when that planet was afflicted in their chart with very positive results.

FIND YOUR PERSONAL MANTRAS

A great secret being released with this book is how to find the best mantras for you from the list of 108. This secret has been closely kept by a few Indian Astrologers and I am indebted to my teacher, Pandit Sanjay Rath, for enlightening me about this.

It is very simple. The reason why there are 108 mantras for the planets as well as such lists for the deities is because the zodiac is naturally divided into 108 segments. 108 is said to be the number of Shree, the Goddess of prosperity. Astrologically, it is our whole world. For example, the name of a new born child is often given based on the Moon's place in these divisions.

It is not only the Moon that is important. The Sun is very important and all the other planets of Vedic Astrology can be key. It all depends on our chart. Whatever the chart, doing the mantra for the position of a planet can be very beneficial. It will resonate with us and thus has extra energy.

There are a number of approaches for finding a powerful mantra for you or for a client, student or friend. The first I describe requires no astrology and the others are connected to the actual positions of the planets. For those with an interest in Vedic Astrology, this can become quite detailed as we drill down on the relationship between different planets. Therefore, a chapter on advanced applications is to be found in the printed version of the book. Here we give the easy astrological applications.

However you arrive at a mantra, please pay attention to the caveat mentioned in the previous section.

Method One, the Random Number

Picking a random number may sound an unlikely idea but it is something that many prognostic systems employ, including the Vedic Astrology method of answering questions. This technique often gives clear insights. If you are calm and quietly focused, then nature talks to you and one way of facilitating this is picking a number. There are really two situations, finding a number for oneself and finding one for another. For example, if you are a Yoga teacher whose student wants a mantra or someone sharing with a friend.

Suppose you want a random number for yourself and do not want to imagine a number out of 108. You can get three single digit numbers by picking numbers you see. One way is to open a book and take the final digit of the page number and do this three times. For example, suppose you open a book at random three times and get pages 21, 143 and 79. Pick the final digits which would be 1, 3 and 9. Write down these digits to form a number 139 and adjust

to the desired range by subtracting 108. In this example, $139 - 108 = 31$. Of course, you can come up with many alternate ways of getting a number.

My astrological software Shri Jyoti Star₂ gives a random number. In the Data Entry screen, click 'Enter Number'. If you are asked about 'Replacing the current chart...' click Yes or No. In the next screen, make sure the Range is set to 108 and you will see a random number is given to you.

If there is another person involved, one can ask them for a number. This often works. What we want is a number between 1 and 108. If the person gives us a number larger than 108, we can keep subtracting 108 until we get a number in the desired range. For example, if they say 250, then subtracting 108 twice (216) gives 34. However, we may feel that the person is interpreting our answer to mean a single digit number only or perhaps knows the system we are using too well and may be biased towards certain numbers. Then we can ask for three single digit numbers as in the method described just above but we can write them down in reverse order. This is just a suggestion, in reality we can use any scheme that we like.

A separate app for this book is planned, which will do both random number and astrological calculations (information will be posted on YogaOfThePlanets.com).

Method Two, Using the Astrological Chart

The following is how to find the number for your natal Moon (or any planet). First, find out the sidereal position from any software, for example Shri Jyoti Star. In the current version 7, it will also give you the mantra number next to the planet glyphs in charts. The planned app for this book will also give the number (see YogaOfThePlanets.com) but it is easy to do it by hand if one has the planet position. Examples are given below.

In the table following, look up the planet position and find the number. Note, the table is at the end of this section and it is quite narrow to facilitate reading on narrow screens. If you still cannot see the whole width of the table, rotate your device to Landscape or pinch in until you can see the whole table.

For example, suppose the planet is at Virgo 5 degrees. 5° is between $3^{\circ}20'$ and $6^{\circ}40'$ so look in the second column of numbers under $6^{\circ}40'$ in the row for Virgo. You will find the number 47. Then look in the book for the mantra numbered 47. In the main text, the number is given at the start of the commentary, after the mantra. In the lists at the end, the mantra follows the number. For the Moon, the mantra for 47 is 'om muktidāya namaḥ'.

This is the simplest application of the rule where the number is counted from the start of the zodiac. This can be called 'God's view' as the beginning of the zodiac is the beginning of the chart from the point of view of the Creator. Thus, it is very powerful. However, there are other views. There is the count from the Moon, which gives the social or personal view.

There is the count from the Sun, which is like the view from our soul. Another important count is from the Ascendant, which relates to the body and health. Reciting the mantra we get from this count may help our health but if we feel sick we should always consult a medical professional.

We can make a count from any of the planets as the starting point. In Jyotisha (Vedic Astrology) there are systems of planetary cycles (periods), especially the famous Vimshottari Dashā system. All Vedic Astrology software like Shri Jyoti Star give these cycles too. Even some Western Astrology software or online software give them. For example, you might be running a Venus Moon cycle and subcycle. That means you are in the major cycle of Venus and the minor cycle of the Moon (called a Bhukti). In this example, one can count from Venus to the Moon and use the mantra from the Moon list.

For example, let us find the mantra for the Moon from the perspective of the Sun. Let us suppose the Sun is at 8°10' Leo and the Moon is at 4°30' Sagittarius. First find the number for the Sun from the table as we did above, which is 39, and then the number for the Moon from the table which is 74, as 4°30' is greater than 3°20' and less than 6°40'. Now subtract 39 from 74 and add 1, which gives you 36. Then find mantra 36 in the mantra list for the Moon. We add 1 because if both planets have the same number, the answer has to be 1, there is no mantra for zero. If the subtraction gives a negative value, just add 108 to the result.

Now you know how to find key mantras for your chart in general and for your Dashā cycles. I recommend you start with 'God's view' as this can be considered the most important.

(The table is on the next page)

Degrees up to

Sign	3 ⁰	6 ⁰	10 ⁰	13 ⁰	16 ⁰	20 ⁰	23 ⁰	26 ⁰	30 ⁰
	20'	40'		20'	40'		20'	40'	
Aries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Taurus	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Gemini	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Cancer	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Leo	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
Virgo	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54
Libra	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63
Scorpio	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72
Sagittarius	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81
Capricorn	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
Aquarius	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99
Pisces	100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108

THE ASTROLOGICAL HOUSES

In various places in this book you will find reference to houses or places from some important personal marker such as the Ascendant or the Moon. The simplest and traditional way of understanding this is in terms of the 12 signs of the zodiac, Aries, Taurus, etc. If the Moon is in Taurus, then Taurus is the first house or place from the Moon. Gemini is the second. Aries is the twelfth, etc. One only has to count round by signs. The Ascendant is in the sign rising on the Eastern horizon at the time of birth.

THE JOURNEY

On March 3rd, 1995, I entered the sacred and tranquil valley surrounding the small village of Kollur. I had fostered a desire to visit here for eight years since a friend told me about it. I did not know why I felt this connection but when I was finally able to travel to India I set my heart on reaching that place. It seemed very special and I must have feared going straight there in case my energy was unprepared. I chose to go first to Tamil Nadu on the opposite coast and to the great temple of Rāmeshvaram.

Rāmeshvaram is on the spit of land opposite Sri Lanka. This is the place Shrī Rāma worshipped Lord Shiva before launching his campaign to recover his wife Sītā from the demon king. To cross the ocean, his army of monkeys and bears built a bridge or causeway across the ocean. This was many thousands of years ago but, amazingly, the remains of a causeway to Sri Lanka are still visible in satellite photos. According to temple records, Shrī Rāma's bridge was passable being completely above the sea until destroyed by a cyclone in 1480 AD.

From Rāmeshvaram, I visited the great temple of Mīnakshī and thence to the very tip of India, Kanyakumari. This place has remarkable temples especially that of the Virgin Goddess. I rose and went at 3:30 am and was almost alone in witnessing the bathing of the Goddess in milk. It was the Full Moon day. A little later I did homage to the shrine for the Navagraha and received a distinct blessing. Prior to that I had done some study of Jyotisha but had received no authority from any Guru or other source to study and practice. This was a most unexpected Grace.

From Kanyakumari, I travelled up the Kerala coast visiting Ashrams and temples until I came to Kollur. It was a great moment, though for no obvious reason at all. Kollur is home to the famous temple of Devī Mookāmbikā, the Goddess of the mouth. It is said she grants blessings related to the voice and the arts. Most evenings, artists from all over India come to perform before her. They sing, dance and play instruments.

At the time I knew nothing about this temple. I did not know that astrologers from all over South India come here to pray and do penance for Vāk Siddhi, the power that whatever one says proves true. After all, people expect an astrologer to have this power. While, in rare cases, it is possible that a person is born with this, generally it only arises after long and sincere spiritual practice. This is why Vedic Astrology, Jyotisha, is primarily a spiritual discipline and one should seek a guru or gurus to guide one's spiritual and intellectual development.

The essence of success in an earthly endeavour is the Grace of the Goddess and for each aspirant there is some form that appeals to him or her and which can grant success.

There are rules for finding this form but ultimately it is very personal. I should make it clear that talk of gods and goddesses does not conflict with the monotheistic view because the Vedic view is that the One takes whatever form we desire or can be approached as purely formless if that is our path.

The worship of the Goddess in India is, at its peak, related to the Shrī Vidyā and the Shrī Chakra. The great sage and teacher Adi Shankarāchārya installed a Shrī Chakra under the deity in the Mookāmbikā temple. After some time in Kollur, I came to know that he also installed a Shrī Chakra at the top of the highest mountain nearby where the root shrine of the Goddess is to be found. Part of the pilgrimage is to walk to the top of this mountain. It is about 12 miles or one can take the bus part of the way and walk the last 3-4 hours. I had many extraordinary experiences on this mountain as well as in the temple, which I will write about elsewhere.

While I was staying at the temple, somehow I conceived of this book. It seemed to me that the sets of 108 names of the Grahas (planets) were important and used by astrologers but I could find no trace of a translation or commentary. So I started making notes. When I could not understand a word, I discussed it with my friend UmaShankar Jois who is one of the distinguished priests at the temple. He studied Jyotisha with a great Guru though he passed away before my friend's studies were complete. UmaShankar is a great expert in the remedial measures and he felt I had some knowledge on the analysis of charts so we spent a lot of time discussing Jyotisha together.

I stayed at Kollur for more than 40 days, as is the custom, and then went for Shivarātri in Varanasi. This is the greatest festival for Lord Shiva and Varanasi is considered the city of Shiva, and is one of the most profound places to celebrate it. As I was about to leave Kollur, I went to the temple to take Her leave to go. The priests put me at the front during the Arti (ritual waving of lights before the shrine), which is the peak of the evening worship. Then I got on the bus to go to Bangalore where I could catch a train for the North.

As it happened, the conductor of this bus was part of a ring of thieves who stole the luggage of innocents like me. I arrived in Bangalore without anything, all my notes were gone. Still I managed to continue my journey and reached Varanasi, the great city of Shiva, at 4 am on Shivarātri. I washed and went straight to the temple having no luggage to concern me. Standing in the queue I noticed that I was the only male wearing traditional clothing. There was a guard on the door and they often turn 'tourists' away. He looked me over for a while and then enthusiastically said 'om namaḥ śivāya' and waived me in.

The next year, I returned to Kollur with another notebook. I started by writing down all that I remembered and naturally found that my understanding had improved over the year and quickly was ahead of my previous work. When I left Kollur after another 40+ days I had just

a few names which I could not decipher. I visited Prof. Ramachandra Rao in Bangalore who was one of the two people that I found who had published the lists of the names. We had an interesting discussion. He was a very great scholar. Unfortunately, he has now passed away. Travelling through India I met many good scholars who kindly gave me their opinions so the meanings became clear. Since then, from time to time I wrote my small commentary. It reflects many stages in my own spiritual life. I hope you enjoy it.

In 2007, I visited a small house a few miles north of the great Konark temple. This temple, though now partially ruined, was perhaps India's greatest temple to the Sun god. It is built like a giant chariot. Some of the carvings are now in the British Museum including the large carvings of the nine Grahas (planets). The Konark temple stands near the beach in the North Eastern part of India's V shape so is one of the first places to see the rays of the rising Sun. Konark is some 20 miles north of Puri where the great Jagannātha temple of Lord Krishna is to be found administered by the Shankarāchārya of the East. He is charged with maintaining the *Rig Veda*, accepted as humanity's oldest recorded wisdom text.

About 500 years ago, the great spiritual teacher Chaitanya Mahāprabhu resided here and the lineages derived from him are still very widespread today, such as ISKCON. He had five 'sakhas' or friends, as they were called, one of which was Swāmi Achyutānanda. The Swāmi was initiated by the great teacher at an early age and went on to become the King's astrologer, a noted author of over 200 books and an enlightened sage. He also founded 13 schools in the region. These taught various sciences and several were dedicated to Jyotisha. When he was leaving his body, he promised to remain in a 'shunya' form. Shunya means the void and it is a term he explained in great depth in one of his books. It does not refer to mere nothingness but to a profound state of Being.

He kept his promise and even today you can go and consult him. That is where I was going. There is a small shrine and next to it are the quarters of a pandit who keeps and interprets a set of copper plates (tamra poti). These plates only contain some drawings like the shape of a lotus, but when you enter there with a question in your mind, the answer appears written in ancient Odia (the local language 500 years ago) and the pandit reads them for you. If you look, you can actually see the writing appear. I went there with several friends, all of whom were students of Pandit Sanjay Rath who is the last remaining person carrying the knowledge of the Jyotisha schools founded by the Swāmi. In effect, we had joined his lineage. The answers we got were remarkably pertinent and insightful. We were all given mantras. I later talked to a colleague who has taken over 40 people there and he said no one had ever been given a mantra.

The Swāmi told me to finish my book. I noticed that when I did the mantra, I would work more on this text. I hope he forgives me for the long time spent in fulfilling his instruction

but perhaps I or the time was not ripe before now. This year (2015) marks the 20th year since I started and only this year did I make the important discovery about the Vimshottari Dashā which is published in this book. In the derivation of the Vimshottari Dashā cycles or periods, the great significance of 20 years is revealed.

The name of the Sun temple is from Kona + Arka. Arka is a name of the Sun and Kona means trine. In Jyotisha, this indicates the Dharma Trikoṇa, the sustainer of life, which I have written about in many places in this book and is so important in the interpretation of the Vimshottari Dashā.

NOTES ON PRONOUNCIATION FROM THE TRANSLITERATION

In the transliteration, there are marks called diacriticals that aid correct pronunciation.

In Sanskrit there are long and short syllables. The long ones are to be sounded for twice as long as the short ones, even longer is OK. Vowels with a line over them like 'ā' and double vowels like 'ai' are all long. 'ḥ' (h with a dot under it) is pronounced like 'ah', that is with aspiration. It is often pronounced as 'ahah' but this is not recommended for mantras as it effectively adds another syllable and the syllable count of a mantra is important. 'ś' with an acute accent is like 'sh'. For example, 'śukrah' is pronounced 'shukrah'.

Consonants or sibilants with a dot under them like ṭ or ṣ are retroflex. For example, ṭ is pronounced as the 't' in Tom. You curl your tongue back and strike your palate. 't' on the other hand is a dental sound. 'th' is 't' with some aspiration as are all the other syllables that have an 'h' like 'bh', 'dh' and 'gh'. You just blow a little when saying the consonant.

The 'ṛ' such as in 'bṛhat' is a vowel in Sanskrit pronounced like the 'ry' in jewelry. 'c' is pronounced as 'ch', as in 'change'. In the commentary, I usually use 'ch'. If 'ch' appears in the transliteration, then it is like 'chh', which is 'ch' with some extra aspiration.

Please visit a Sanskrit learning web site or teacher for more detailed advice. One good site is learnsanskrit.org.

The Devanagari (Sanskrit) support on a PC is excellent but may not be so perfect on mobile devices. Older Kindle devices and other eReaders may not show it at all. One can always check against the transliteration, which should be correct.

Please note that the first time part of a mantra is mentioned in the following text, it is italicized. Sanskrit terms in the commentaries are often transliterated but not always according to the more rigorous scheme. Sometimes the more usual form is followed using the standard English alphabet.

HYMN IN HONOUR OF THE PLANETS

ॐ गं गणपतये नमः

om gaṁ gaṇapataye namaḥ

ब्रह्मा मुरारिस्त्रिपुरान्तकारी भानुः शशी भूमिसुतो बुधश्च।
गुरुश्च शुक्रः शनिराहुकेतवः सर्वे ग्रहाः शान्तिं करा भवन्तु॥

brahmā murāristripurāntakārī bhānuḥ śaśī

bhūmisuto budhaśca |

guruśca śukraḥ śanirāhuketavaḥ sarve grahāḥ

śānti karā bhavantu ||

Brahmā (the Creator), Murāri (Vishnu, the Sustainer), Tripurāntakarin (Siva, the slayer of the demon Tripurāsura), Bhānu (the Sun), Shashin (the Moon), Bhūmisuta (Mars, the son of the Earth), Budha (Mercury), Guru (Jupiter), Shukra (Venus), Shani (Saturn), Rāhu and Ketu, may all these Grahas be peaceful.

KETU, THE SOUTH NODE

ॐ केतवे नमः

om ketave namaḥ

1. Salutations to the ray of light.

Ketu is one of the eclipse points where the Sun, Moon, and Earth align. It is the South node of the Moon. This is the point where the Moon crosses the ecliptic and starts to move to the South of the path of the Sun. It is interesting that the South node is associated with liberation and the North node, Rāhu, is associated with illusion.

Looking up at the sky, if we see two planets close together it is natural to make the inference that the planet higher in the sky, closer to the pole, is somehow dominating the one below it. In the Northern hemisphere, this means, the planet that is more to the North. This is why, in Vedic Astrology, the planet to the North is usually considered the winner in 'planetary war', a phenomenon when two planets come within one zodiacal degree of each other. In simple terms, two planets that are very close together compete and the one to the North wins, unless the lower one is exceptionally bright (like Venus).

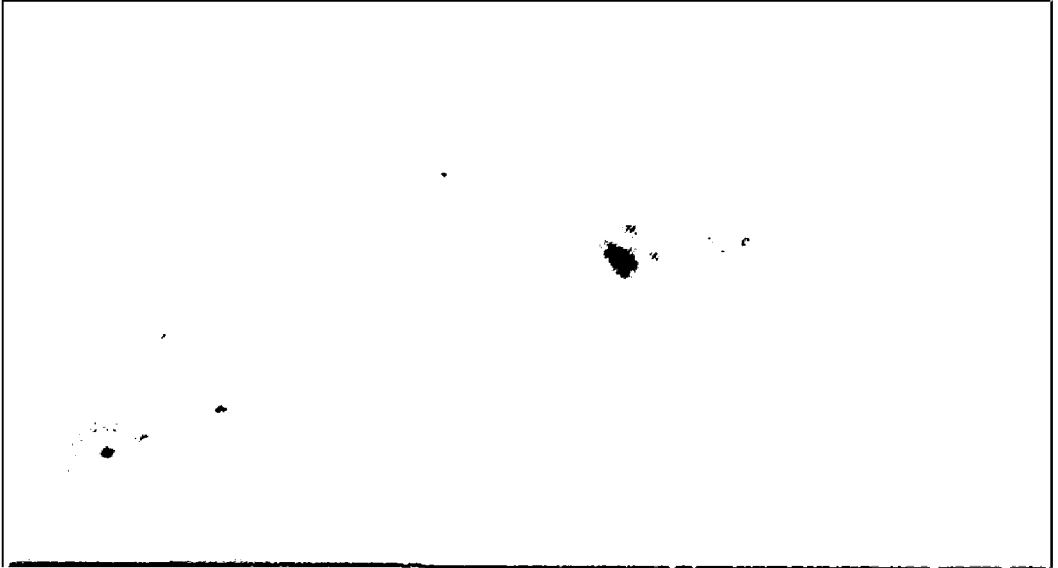
The Sun represents the soul or consciousness. The Moon represents the mind. When the Moon starts to rise above the Sun's path, then it is as if the mind is gaining ground over the soul. The Sun represents our true knowing, which is a function of something more fundamental than the mind. The Vedas say that the mind arises out of the heart. Feelings arise out of the heart. Mind and feelings are both represented by the Moon. The Sun represents the heart. When the Moon moves to the North, we move out of our knowing into our needs and wants, hence the uprising of illusion that Rāhu represents.

When the Moon moves to the South, it is as if the inner knowing is gaining ground over the worldly tendencies. There is more core honesty. We can enjoy many things but fundamentally we know that we do not need them. This realization is a part of liberation and this is indicated by Ketu. Ketu is the signifier of enlightenment. This astronomical explanation is my way of remembering the roles of Rāhu and Ketu. It does not mean liberation is reversed in the Southern hemisphere.

Ketu is an eclipse point but it is not about darkness even though it may look like a black hole. A black hole is something into which one falls and, at a certain point, passes beyond any chance of return. Scientists used to think that black holes were black, but then Stephen

Hawkings (author of *A Brief History of Time*) showed that they actually glow. In the universe we find some extraordinary phenomena – light shows on the grandest possible scale – arise due to black holes.

The picture below is of a jet streaming out from the vicinity of a black hole in the centre of a galaxy. The jet is many times bigger than any galaxy and is pure Ketu (photo from the Hubble Space Telescope, courtesy of ESA/NASA).



The *Brahma Sūtras*, the great Vedāntic text, end with a short aphorism that is repeated twice, ‘*anāvṛttiḥ śabdādanāvṛttiḥ śabdāt*’. It means that ‘from here there is no return, this is the teaching’. The *Brahma Sūtras* describe the stages of final enlightenment – the various states or experiences along the way. Only when one passes beyond that point of no return, is one truly out of the field of relativity just like a particle crossing the event horizon of a black hole. Beyond that, ordinary Physics breaks down. It is utterly beyond our comprehension.

It is interesting that we are now discovering black holes all over the place, more than a hundred within our own galaxy. There is an enormous one at the centre of our own galaxy (in early Sagittarius), but many others are scattered here and there. Even a smaller one is heading our way though it is not expected to swallow the Earth. I grew up with the real possibility of a black hole being only a theoretical idea. Now we find that we are living in close proximity to a whole family of them.

ॐ स्थूलशिरसे नमः

om sthūlaśirase namaḥ

2. Having a massive head (*Shiras*).

Sthula can mean big, dense and coarse. This name could indicate stupidity, but also that state where the experience of the head has become a sense of infinity, as if our small head is vast. Both of these states are forms of headlessness.

This name may seem surprising at first but Ketu is the planet of surprises. Something that is windy and tends to reduce everything to nothing would be expected to be rather slight, even invisible. It is just like the black holes. The hole itself is invisible but in addition to the glow from the periphery, it produces the cosmic fireworks like that seen in the photo above. These are a result of the massive gravitational force around the black hole that is constantly swallowing matter. The matter may disappear but the hole gets heavier bending space itself in a very intense way.

This name is also related to Ketu representing mistakes. Someone who makes mistakes is called thick-headed. Ketu causes mistakes by making us headless. This effect has numerous expressions from the fundamentalist who is headlessly following good or bad advice, to the saint who has made the ultimate mistake, from the point of view of the materialists, in disregarding everything of the world.

Rāhu is the head and Ketu the headless. Thus, in the extreme case, Rāhu represents those who start every sentence with 'I' and Ketu, those who speak of themselves in the third person.

ॐ शिरोमात्राय नमः
om śiromātrāya namaḥ

3. Headless. Literally reaching as far (*Mātra*) as the head (*Shiras*).

The implication of names 2 and 3 are that up to the head (*Shiras*), he is measureable (*Mātra*) and beyond that he is immeasurable. Those marked by Ketu function in the world but are psychically vast.

We can continue with the black hole analogy as it is more than an analogy. Ketu is a massive body without any face. There is no point asking for mercy, it is a one-way ticket. On the other hand, the black holes at the centres of galaxies sustain all the life in that galaxy rather as the Sun does for our solar system in that they have been a key part of the structuring of the galaxy and contributing to the distribution of valuable elements.

Nothing biological could survive an approach to the Sun but it cannot live without it. The Sun's radiation is a direct consequence of its gravitational field. The nuclei in it are crushed together causing nuclear reactions and producing radiation that, sufficiently diluted

by distance and filtering, sustains life. A dying Sun, if heavy enough, can become a candidate for a black hole. Attracting more and more matter, the massive gravitational field can support a far greater living whole. It is rather like the way dying organic matter merges with the earth and sustains the living.

The Rāhu - Ketu axis is related to the spinal column. Ketu is the tail but also the whole column up to the head. This axis in the chart can be used to see if the person will suffer from back ache or more serious spinal problems.

This name also means the greatest peak. Nothing is greater than infinity. Ketu represents the ultimate achievement, liberation or Moksha in Sanskrit. In the previous name we discussed mistakes as a part of headlessness. Most problems can be traced back to a lack of full attention or full awareness. Strangely, only when we lose our 'head' can we experience full awareness.

ॐ ध्वजाकृतये नमः

om dhvajākṛtaye namaḥ

4. His form is a flag or mark (*Dhvaja*). Causing (*Akṛti*) a mark.

Wherever Ketu is found in the astrological chart, a flag is raised. Something out of the usual is indicated there. The word Ketu is also used for comets, meteors and omens. They signify a portent of some unusual phenomena for good or ill. We love them and we hate them. Something unusual will always attract a crowd but we may try to avoid the unexpected for fear it threatens our existence. Ketu is associated with great anxiety but it has its own incomprehensible attraction.

When one person's Ketu connects with a personal marker, like the Moon, in another's chart, they often feel drawn to each other despite the obvious potential for distress.

A serious mistake is said to 'raise a flag'. Flags also denote royalty and important places like shrines. If Ketu sits in the fourth house, denoting place of residence, one may live in a palace or may raise a flag or obvious signboard outside.

ॐ नवग्रहयुताय नमः

om navagrahayutāya namaḥ

5. One of the nine seizers (*Nava Graha*).

The planets seize or control our lives or so it appears. Most literally, this name means that Ketu is that power that arises if they all join together (*Yuti*). There is a story of the Mother Goddess. The Gods gathered to invoke Her to defeat the demonic forces that were harassing the world. All their powers merged together and from that Her form arose.

She is the cosmic Shakti or power and Shakti is associated with Mars. Ketu is said to be like Mars, so Ketu is also profoundly about the Shakti. Ketu makes everything very subtle. When conjoined with Mars, it refines that power, which can awaken the Kuṇḍalinī. Even on its own, Ketu is capable of wielding any kind of power and producing any kind of result.

Another meaning of this name is that it can be separated from the other eight planets, as in the Chara Kāraka scheme (personal significator scheme) and in Astottari Dashā, one of the most important Dashā systems that lay out the planetary periods in a life. I will explain this Dashā in a forthcoming book.

ॐ सिंहिकाऽसुरीगर्भसम्भवाय नमः

om sim'hikā'surīgarbhasambhavāya namaḥ

6. Born (*Sambhava*) in the womb (*Garbha*) of the demonness (*Asurī*) *Simhikā*.

Simhikā was a demonness. Rāhu is born from the semen of a great Brāhmin saint and the womb of a demon. Thus, he is both divine and demonic in his action. Simhī means a lioness. The lion symbolizes rulership, which is the power that controls life and death. The Sanskrit word for lion or Leo is Simha. It is derived from the word Himsa, injury and violence, by a reversal that gives it the power to protect its pride (family and people) (See also Rāhu 2).

ॐ महाभीतिकराय नमः

om mahābhītikarāya namaḥ

7. Causing (*Kara*) great anxiety (*Mahā Bhīti*).

Rāhu is said to cause Bhaya or fear. Ketu causes *Bhīti* or anxiety. Bhīti is alarm or dread. It is what you feel when you see an omen or sign of approaching danger. We will see that Ketu represents the end of things. When we are invested in something continuing, as we are in normal life, anticipated endings can be frightening like the iceberg in front of the Titanic. As Mark Twain said, "Courage is resistance to fear, mastering fear, not the absence of fear."

ॐ चित्रवर्णाय नमः

om citravarṇāya namaḥ

8. Of brilliant or variegated appearance (*Varṇa*).

This is the first of many names of Ketu containing the word *Chitra*. *Chitra* also means bright, clear, spotted, diversified, different, surprising, wonderful or strange. As a noun, it means a picture or painting, a brilliant ornament, an extraordinary appearance, wonder, the heavens and a type of leprosy, because of its visible appearance.

Chitrā is one of the 27 lunar mansions or Nakshatras, the Vedic constellations. Ketu is profoundly connected with this Nakshatra. *Rāhu* is said to be born or of the nature of *Ashwini*, the first Nakshatra (*Rāhu* 44). Naturally, when *Rāhu* is arising at the beginning of *Ashwini*, Ketu is in the middle of *Chitrā* where we find one of the most beautiful and bright stars on the zodiac which we call *Spica*. Indeed, many astrologers mark the zodiac by taking this as the 180 degree point. There is no obvious star at zero degrees of Aries. Like *Rāhu* it is quite dark. We have seen that Ketu acts as a flag. That is why *Spica* is taken as the flag that marks the zodiac.

According to *Surya Siddhānta*, the most ancient of the extant Vedic astronomical texts, this is where Ketu was when the solar system began. This means that the astronomical computations of the planetary and Lunar nodal positions start from a moment when this situation prevailed. The centre of *Chitra* is associated with *Shaktī*, who manifests the universe and opposite is *Shiva*, the unmanifest. That is why there is no visible star at the beginning of *Ashwinī*. In the context of the teaching of *Shri Pāda Shri Vallabha*, the first *Avatār* of Lord *Dattātreyā*, it is explained that the power of any star is maximum exactly 180 degrees from it. He took birth in *Chitrā* on the day sacred to *Gaṇeśa*.

This is also the way it is in the structure of the *Rig Veda*, the most fundamental of the Vedic texts from which everything else emerges. The other Vedic texts and even the whole universe appear from the *Rig Veda* as a commentary on it. The *Rig Veda* starts with a verse that is said to contain the whole teaching. Half way through the first *Maṇḍala* or circle, which is also said to contain the whole, traditionally there is located an unmanifest verse (*Avyakta Sūkta*), which was to be recited silently. Thus an outer expression is matched on the opposite side by an inner one. While the outer one is obvious, the texts tell us that the inner repetition is vastly more powerful in its effects.

Interpret this as you will; the zodiac is a *Maṇḍala* or circle and it moves from an emptiness with great potential to a manifest fullness and then back to where it started but

with the wisdom of the journey.

ॐ श्रीपिङ्गलाक्षकाय नमः

om śrīpiṅgalākṣakāya namaḥ

9. Like a beautiful auspicious tawny coloured eye.

The use of the words *Shrī Piṅgala* strongly points to the connection with the Piṅgala Nāḍi, one of the three subtle channels that run up the spine. Piṅgala relates to the Sun and the right nostril. The Ida is therefore associated with Rāhu and is related to the Moon and the left nostril.

Piṅgala also means fire, a kind of owl, a kind of snake or a famous treasure. *Aksha* means eye but is also knowledge, an axis or axle, and the soul. It is easy to construct descriptions of Ketu from all of these. Ketu is an Agni or fire element Graha.

Some mantras activate the Piṅgala and some the Ida. That is why, when you are initiated, you may be given two and they must be done together. However, the mantra given by a saint should activate the central channel, Suṣumṇā, and can be safely done on its own.

ॐ फुल्लधूमसकाशाय नमः

om phulladhūmasakāśāya namaḥ

10. Having the appearance (*Sakāsha*) of a great cloud, smoke or a meteor extending across the sky (*Phulla Dhūma*).

Phulla can also indicate horripilation. This can be due to an exciting or frightening omen like a meteor. The onset of awakening when the Kuṇḍalinī rises can have this effect.

Ketu's planetary cycle lasts for seven years. During that time many unexpected things may happen and we may receive various kinds of offers. While these may look promising, we can easily spend Ketu running around chasing dreams. His smoke is preventing us discerning what is useful. This can give rise to nervous strain and windy problems. We may get run down physically. We should try to maintain a good diet and routine and be very discriminating about where the energy goes.

Even though Ketu signifies enlightenment and can give profound flashes of it, Ketu's cycle can make it hard to meditate in a regular way. It is perhaps more about attention to the profundity Ketu signifies than repeating a mantra or other practices.

ॐ तीक्ष्णदंष्ट्राय नमः

om tīkṣṇadamṣṭrāya namaḥ

11. Having terrible teeth (*Tikṣṇa Daṁṣṭra*).

This makes them terrifying. Teeth are for killing prey and devouring food. He devours whatever comes near. The teeth also make the food digestible and thus capable of nourishing. The fear that arises is thus based on a misunderstanding of the true value of his presence. The part of us that is to be eaten objects but that is not what we are, just what we identify with out of ignorance.

ॐ महोदराय नमः

om mahodarāya namaḥ

12. Having a large (*Mahā*) belly (*Udara*).

This is also a name of Lord Gaṇeśha and has connections to Ketu 45. The large belly can indicate a vast or unlimited capacity as experienced when the consciousness touches infinity. It also indicates great power as the belly is related to the third Chakra of power. This name enlightens one if one is frightened by the last name. Due to his power and capacity, Ketu can give any amount in any way of anything. He is the inner power of the great and the wise.

ॐ रक्तनेत्राय नमः

om raktanetrāya namaḥ

13. Red eyed (*Rakta Netra*).

This is like Mars. It also could indicate a Yogi. It is said in the yogic texts that the eyes of a Yogi are red, black and white. I have seen this in the eyes of a great Yogi. Maybe they have more blood flow in the head as some research has suggested and that expands the blood vessels.

A more profound view is that the eyes of a great soul naturally shine. Rakta means impassioned. The eye is the gateway of the heart. A heart on fire with truth shows in the glow of the eyes. Ketu can excite desire as it activates the Kuṇḍalinī Shakti and that can initially en-

energize the second Chakra. This also puts passion in the eyes, though of a different kind.

ॐ चित्रकारिणे नमः

om citrakāriṇe namaḥ

14. Causing (*Kārin*) clarity or wonderment (*Chitra*).

As we discussed above, Ketu is deeply associated with Chitrā Nakshatra and its wonderful star Spica. He, like Mars, gives mental clarity and can help with conceiving abstract notions or forms. By reducing whatever it touches, he can also reduce the noise in the mind and give rise to true inner silence. It is said in the *Shiva Sūtras* (l. 12) '*vismayo yogabhūmikā*' – the stages of Yoga, inner union, are a wonder. He brings these about.

ॐ तीव्रकोपाय नमः

om tīvrakopāya namaḥ

15. Having intense anger or ardent passion (*Tīvrakopa*).

Also acute disorders, endless morbid irritation and more such meanings. This is part of his reducing process. As mentioned above, he can excite strong passion. This can be extremely positive if properly focussed. It takes ardent passion to achieve the greatest things.

ॐ महासुराय नमः

om mahāsurāya namaḥ

16. The great (*Mahā*) demon (*Asura*).

The feminine form of this name is used for Mother Durgā because she killed the great demons. When Ketu is under feminine influence in a birth chart by association with the Moon or Venus, then She may be propitiated to help with any difficulties we are having with love or our emotional life. She will help us overcome our ego, and thus attain true wisdom.

ॐ क्रूरकण्ठाय नमः

om krūrakaṇṭhāya namaḥ

17. Having a wounded (*Krūra*) throat (*Kaṇṭha*).

It was cut by Lord Vishnu as explained under Rāhu 4. Ketu restricts expression especially in association with Mercury or the second or third house or its ruler as all these are connected with communication. It can also mean having a fierce or cruel voice. While *Krūra* almost always has a negative connotation, it can also mean formidable and Ketu has the ability to make magic out of anything. If Ketu is associated with communication and we can get over any anger issues due to a sense of being wounded, then his magic can give us a special power of speech.

Another version of this name is *Pāpakantaka* meaning a sinful impediment or thorn.

ॐ क्रोधनिधये नमः

om krodhanidhaye namaḥ

18. The receptacle of anger (*Krodha Nidhi*).

This is how we tend to respond to restriction. Ketu restricts strongly and that can lead to a sense of frustration. Frustration is the receptacle of anger. If we feel frustrated, we should try to relax inside of it because the combinations that give rise to frustration in a birth chart do not go away. Temporary feelings of frustration can come due to planetary transits that pass quite quickly, but they also last as long as they last. Nothing is gained by struggling with them. We may feel that the problem is due to some other person, the government, or many other things, but it is helpful to note that other people in a similar situation are not always feeling the same way. Anger will make us ill if it persists so, for our own well-being, we need to find a way to let go. This is what Ketu wants because our liberation is in letting go.

Letting go is not easy as long as we imagine that there is something to be gained from not letting go. The *Yoga Sūtras* tell us that letting go, called *Samyama*, is exactly the technique for fulfilling desire. Thus, both liberation and worldly fulfillment come from letting go and yet we hang on and remain frustrated. Ketu's teaching is that whatever we think, try doing the opposite. This is explained in the *Jaimini Upadesha Sūtras*.

ॐ छायाग्रहविशेषकाय नमः

om chāyāgrahaviśeṣakāya namaḥ

19. He is distinguished (*Viśeṣaka*) by being a shadow Graha (*Chhāyā Graha*).

Ketu is an invisible point that shows itself in the form of a shadow when the Sun and Moon align. That shadow, allows us to see sights which are otherwise invisible (see also Rāhu 31).

ॐ अन्त्यग्रहाय नमः

om antyagrahāya namaḥ

20. The last (*Antya*) *Graha*, the ninth.

He indicates the end, and thus Moksha, the end of the ego and the complete letting go of all identification. Some astrologers call Ketu the most malefic because he is the end. However, that is only frightening for that which is coming to an end, the illusion of the individual as the ‘doer’. When that illusion has ended, everything continues endlessly. Ketu has no quarrel with anything of the world but in the phase of our hanging on and resisting, everything becomes fair game for sacrifice. Whatever we are identifying with can be taken away to show us what is real.

ॐ महाशीर्षाय नमः

om mahāśīrṣāya namaḥ

21. Who has a vast (*Mahā*) head (*Shīrṣa*).

He will not be pushed out of the way. The most massive bodies in the universe are black holes. As discussed and illustrated above, it has now been found that there are enormous black holes at the centre of all galaxies including our own. Their masses are millions or billions of Suns but they are invisible except for the extraordinary Ketu-like effects created around them.

Ketu is the significator for Moksha, liberation. The primary characteristic of that is infinite consciousness. Normally we associate the head with consciousness and the crown Chakra. This is where infinity is imagined to reside and is just above the top of the head. The state of transcendence is like one’s head having gone to infinity. It is truly vast.

Rāhu is the head of the demon and Ketu is the trunk. So the Ketu experience is being headless. This can mean mindless behaviour or the state of Moksha where the head, the individuality, has been replaced by infinity. In this case, we become Mahā, great. That is why saints are called Mahātma, great souled.

On a more mundane level, Ketu signifies the elite especially royalty whose 'head', or influence, is unusually large.

ॐ सूर्यारये नमः

om sūryāraye namaḥ

22. The enemy (*Arī*) of the Sun (*Sūrya*).

As Ketu eclipses the Sun, it acts like an enemy. The Sun is our vitality and Ketu can wear away at it. On the other hand, the real beauty of the solar corona is only seen when an eclipse occurs.

When one feels eclipsed, something less obvious may be revealed. Those with Ketu on the Ascendant or with the Sun live feeling perpetually eclipsed. However, they fascinate others in certain ways. The glory of the Sun is not for the Sun to enjoy. What we are is for others, not for us. Naturally letting it shine as it will, brings wonderful good to us and to others.

ॐ पुष्पवद्गहिने नमः

om puṣpavadgrahine namaḥ

23. The seizer (*Grahin*) of the Sun and the Moon or seizing that which is blooming or flowering (*Puṣpavad*).

His tendency is opposite to the flowering one. He is like a whirlpool or vortex which crushes or squeezes everything falling into it so that it becomes finer and finer. This refining process is what allows us to directly experience the subtle levels of creation and the Supreme Self.

ॐ वरहस्ताय नमः

om varahastāya namaḥ

24. One hand (*Hasta*) grants blessings (*Vara*).

This name promises us that his role is not just damaging. If we give him our respect, he can grant anything we desire.

ॐ गदापाणये नमः

om gadāpāṇaye namaḥ

25. Having a mace (*Gadā*) in the hand (*Pāṇi*).

Like many deities, Ketu is holding weapons symbolizing his role. The *Gadā* is a special type of mace. It was a very heavy weapon and symbolized exceptional strength. Mars (name 74) also carries a *Gadā* and Ketu is said to be like Mars. The *Gadā* is associated with the Southern direction, ruled by Lord Yama and associated with Mars. Both get directional strength in the South and both have a special connection to the awakening of higher consciousness.

Meditation and other spiritual practices help to avoid the fall of this weapon that can manifest as disease and other shocks.

ॐ चित्रवस्त्रधराय नमः

om citravastradharāya namaḥ

26. Wearing (*Dhara*) beautiful and surprising clothes (*Chitra Vastra*).

Chitra is a picture but it also suggests something that catches the eye. Anything dazzling, that has a 'wow' factor like movie special effects and outrageous fashions, exotic jewelry, etc., is signified by Ketu. Life would be very dull without him.

ॐ चित्रध्वजपताकाय नमः

om citradhvajapatākāya namaḥ

27. His emblem (*Patāka*) is a dazzling flag (*Chitra Dhvaja*).

Ketu catches the eye in whatever way the position in the chart suggests. I have found that it is Ketu that is the key Graha in the chart of the British monarchy. This is natural as Ketu is the lord of Maghā Nakshatra in Leo whose symbol is a throne.

ॐ घोराय नमः

om ghorāya namaḥ

28. The terrible.

Ghora is frightful and violent but it can also mean venerable, awful and sublime. It all depends on our inner orientation. Ketu is an irresistible force drawing us towards the subtle. That is sublime but frightening for the gross aspects of our awareness. Attempts to resist it can disturb the balance of the mind.

Psychics have a gift that Ketu has given them. I have met several psychics with health issues and who had a distortion in their aura related to the third eye. This suggests that their work is undermining their health. If one's work has a psychic component, one should take great care.

ॐ चित्रथाय नमः

om citrarathāya namaḥ

29. Having an eye-catching (*Chitra*) chariot or vehicle (*Ratha*).

Everything about him is a wonder, while he remains invisible, just like the black hole in the photo above (Ketu 1).

ॐ शिखिने नमः

om śikhine namaḥ

30. One who has reached the height of knowledge and enlightenment.

Jupiter represents Gurus, but Ketu indicates those who have reached the highest pinnacle. The combination of Jupiter and Ketu indicates the Parampara or tradition of wisdom, the succession of masters (*Jaimini Upadesha Sūtras* 1.2.115).

Shikhin also means a peacock reminding us again of the dazzling beauty and allure of the inner awakened state. It is said that the word *Rāshi* (sign) comes from *Rāhu* and *Shikhi* because the primal axis of *Rāhu* and Ketu from zero Aries to zero Libra defines the zodiac.

ॐ कुलुत्थभक्षकाय नमः

om kulutthabhakṣakāya namaḥ

31. Enjoying (*Bhakṣaka*) horse-gram (*Kuluttha*), a kind of grain.

This is what is used in Ketu's Pūja. Horse-gram comes in red, brown and black colours. It is never one dull colour.

ॐ वैदूर्याभरणाय नमः

om vaidūryābharaṇāya namaḥ

32. Adorned with (*Bharaṇa*) the *Vaidūrya* gem.

This indicates the gem to be worn as a remedy for Ketu. Generally this is thought of as Cat's Eye, which has a mystic 'eye' (Ketu 9). However, many experts consider Vaidūrya to be lapis lazuli. Lapis is said to be best used by putting a few tiles of it on a wall in one's home.

ॐ उत्पातजनकाय नमः

om utpātajanakāya namaḥ

33. Causing (*Janaka*) ill omens.

Utpāta is a startling event like an earthquake or a meteor boding calamity. Even though it is often used for ill omens, it means a portent in general or something that flies or jumps up. If Ketu is strongly influencing, there is a tendency in the person to move upwards. The person may become a pilot, a mountaineer or live in a penthouse. Ketu rules the upward directions while the other nine Grahas rule the eight directions on a plane.

In one way or another it expresses itself and the highest expression is in the person whose Kuṇḍalinī has risen. Ketu can make us meditate and, with time, the meditation leads to those elevated experiences described in the Yoga Sūtras and other texts.

Another meaning is a prodigy such as someone with extraordinary mathematics ability. It can also mean any extraordinary phenomenon.

ॐ शुक्रमित्राय नमः

om śukramitrāya namaḥ

34. The friend (*Mitra*) of *Shukra*, Venus.

Being a demon, Venus is his Guru but it is especially mentioned here that they are friendly. The main Jyotisha texts do not specify the relationships between the seven visible

Grahas and Rāhu and Ketu. This text gives us some help with this enabling more precision in interpretation and prediction. This tells us that Ketu will be stronger in the signs of Venus and perhaps less damaging to Venus when they are conjoined. Venus Ketu conjunctions can sometimes indicate atypical gender relationships. It can give subtle vision such as the ability to see auras.

ॐ मन्दसखाय नमः

om mandasakhāya namaḥ

35. The friend (*Sakha*) of Saturn.

Manda means the slow one, indicating Saturn. Rāhu and Ketu have the same friends: Venus and Saturn. Rāhu and Ketu can represent people who are in some way discarded or rejected by society. It is Venus and Saturn who try to help them.

Saturn represents democracy and Venus can cause a social conscience especially through Libra. The Sun, Moon, Mars and Jupiter as a group are more concerned with the status quo, which sets up the classic political parties, the Democrat/Socialist versus the Royalist/ Conservative. Of course, being conservative is natural so the fight is over what is to be conserved.

ॐ गदाधराय नमः

om gadādhārāya namaḥ

36. Holding (*Dhara*) a mace (*Gadā*).

The repetition reminds us of his exceptional strength and power to take us beyond death (see also Ketu 25).

ॐ नाकपतये नमः

om nākapataye namaḥ

37. The Lord (*Patī*) of the sky.

Nāka is the firmament or sky and this title would normally go to the Sun or the Moon depending on it being day or night. As Ketu can eclipse either of them, he becomes the ruler. *Nāka* means literally, 'where there is no pain'. This could point to the state of Moksha or

enlightenment that is beyond the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, which cause pain. Ketu is the significator for Moksha.

ॐ अन्तर्वेदीश्वराय नमः

om antarvedīśvarāya namaḥ

38. The ruler (*Ishvara*) over internal knowledge (*Antar Vedit*).

This name confirms the last (37) and tells us that, having taken us beyond duality, Ketu can give us any extent of knowledge of that state and all subtle things.

ॐ जैमिनिगोत्रजाय नमः

om jaiminigotraajāya namaḥ

39. Born (*Ja*) in the family (*Gotra*) of *Jaimini* Rishi.

He is a descendant of the lineage or tribe founded by the great seer Jaimini who is credited with many great contributions to the Vedic wisdom including an important work on astrology called the *Mahārishi Jaimini Upadesha Sūtras*. These Sūtras or aphorisms are written in a very succinct and highly coded form leading to much debate about their meaning. They explain and develop certain aspects of the teachings of Mahārishi Parāshara in his great work *Brihat Parāshara Hora Shastra*. Both works are available in English in several translations. While Jaimini's work is a part of the same body of knowledge, Vedic astrologers often speak of Jaimini astrology as a separate system from Parāshara's. In my opinion, this is a misunderstanding.

Jaimini was the disciple of the great sage VedaVyāsa, who was the son of Mahārishi Parāshara. Upadesha means that the teaching is that of one's Guru, not one's own. Therefore, Jaimini was expounding the essence of the teaching as it came directly from Parāshara's line. In the *Upadesha Sūtras*, he makes it clear that this is the teaching of a lineage and that one can only fully understand this teaching by studying under a member of the lineage. The Jaimini Scholar program is the teaching of such an ancient lineage that has maintained many of the oral instructions that allow us to understand the text. I followed this program under my Guru, Pandit Sanjay Rath from Puri in Eastern India. Some people think that by reading the Sūtras and their translations, they can understand their import. From my experience, I can say that there is absolutely no chance that anyone could arrive at the teachings I received in this way, however smart they might be.

This is all typical Ketu. He is the great secret keeper, the expert in ciphers, the key to every lineage due to his pure devotion to the wisdom and the Guru.

ॐ चित्रगुप्तात्मने नमः

om citraguptātmane namaḥ

40. He is the soul (*Atman*) of *Chitragupta*.

Chitragupta is the record keeper for Yama, the god of death and dharma, the lord of karma – the consequences of our action. It is said that Yama told Lord Brahma, the Creator, that he alone could not track all the deeds of all beings. Brahma meditated on this problem for 11,000 years and when he opened his eyes a man stood before him with a pen and paper. Brahma said, “As you have been conceived in my mind (Chitra is an image) in secret (Gupta), you will be called Chitragupta.” People who have come near death say that at that time one relives the images of one’s entire life in a matter of moments.

Ketu is the one with access to what many call the Akāshic record. Ketu can give us a way of knowing all the subtle things. Chitragupta is the Pratyādhidevatā of Ketu, which means that he is worshipped along with Ketu and can cause Ketu to be more mild in his expression.

ॐ दक्षिणामुखाय नमः

om dakṣiṇāmukhāya namaḥ

41. Facing (*Mukha*) South (*Dakṣiṇā*).

This is the direction the statue faces when placed for worship. South is the direction of Yama (see Ketu 25 and 40) and thus of death. Ketu faces South to overcome death and give us immortality, not of the ego but of the Self.

ॐ मुकुन्दवरपात्राय नमः

om mukundavarapātrāya namaḥ

42. The container (*Pātra*) of the Grace of the Lord (*Mukunda Vara*).

This name also appears under Rāhu (56) where it is explained in more detail. Since Rāhu and Ketu are two parts of the same body, split by the discus of Lord Vishnu, they both have received His Grace (see also Rāhu 4). Association with them can give us touches

of that Divinity. This includes high moments of inner awareness. There is a flavour of that in the experience when we reach the summit of a great mountain, view the world from a high altitude or have other 'breathtaking' visions. If we look at the books and movies that are most successful, we see Rāhu and Ketu fully activated. Rāhu provides the dark and violent aspects while Ketu includes wizards and special powers like flying.

The great saint Tapasviji Mahārāj was staying in a small hut. His attendant kept the hut locked from the outside and came once a day to give the master his meal. Once he opened the door to find three visitors discussing with the master. Seeing the attendant, they explained that they had been passing overhead when they saw that a great sage was meditating and so they had 'dropped in' to pay their respects. This story is from the outstanding book *Maharaj*, now sadly out of print.

ॐ महासुरकुलोद्भवाय नमः

om mahāsurakulodbhavāya namaḥ

43. Born (*Udbhava*) into the family (*Kula*) of a great demon or demonness (*Mahāsura*).

This name makes it clear that he is not of purely divine birth even though subsequently blessed. This gives us hope because most of us believe we are not divine but we would like to touch or even become one with that Divinity.

ॐ घनवर्णाय नमः

om ghanavarṇāya namaḥ

44. Intensely coloured (*Ghana Varṇa*).

Also, of intense appearance or form or belonging to a caste or social group whose quality is extreme in some way. This is how Ketu can indicate fundamentalists and even terrorists. Terrorists are usually people with fundamental views of one kind or another, often religious. It is an expression of headlessness that has taken a destructive turn. When Ketu falls in the ninth house, the house of religion, it is more likely to indicate such extremism. Of course, other factors may render this harmless.

Another meaning would be 'one of great renown'. Ketu does hide the outer but it can also give fame or make us infamous depending on the kind of phenomenon he inspires us to display in the world. It can also mean capable of intense or powerful speech.

ॐ लम्बदेवाय नमः

om lambadevāya namaḥ

45. Vast (*Lamba*) divinity (*Deva*).

Lord Gaṇesha and Ketu are that vastness, the Supreme Being itself. Gaṇesha is called Lambodara, the god with the large belly. The big belly of Gaṇesha is symbolic of that vast Being into which everything is being absorbed. This name tells us that Ketu, as the Graha of the highest truth, is to be associated with Gaṇesha. If we feel that progress is being blocked by Ketu, worship Lord Gaṇesha. The best way to worship Gaṇesha is to rest our attention on that vastness of consciousness. Until we know that vastness, we can keep repeating our chosen mantra, even this one.

ॐ मृत्युपुत्राय नमः

om mṛtyuputrāya namaḥ

46. The child (*Putra*) of death (*Mṛtyu*).

Death and liberation are intimately associated. Death is a form of liberation because the burden of the body, with all its suffering, falls away. Liberation is a kind of death because the sense of tiny individuality falls away. Most of those who have experienced dying found it a wonderful expansion into light and peace. However, merely dying is not liberation and liberation is the end of death. In fact, seeing death is the best incentive to seek liberation. In this sense, liberation indicated by Ketu is the child of death.

Ketu is worshipped to promote family life because of the saying '*Ketuḥ kulasyonnatim*' in the *Navagrahadevatā Prārthana* hymn. This means 'Ketu (please) increase or advance the family.' This is the prayer because Ketu in the fifth house of children, unless associated with benefics, usually prevents children being born.

ॐ उत्पातरूपधारिणे नमः

om utpātarūpadhāriṇe namaḥ

47. Having (*Dhārin*) portents (*Utpāta*) as his form (*Rūpa*).

We can infer Ketu's presence from frightening omens that appear, while Rāhu is known

by the feeling of fear. Whether something causes fear is really just about our reaction to it. The phenomenon itself is just a phenomenon. Ketu represents things that come by surprise. These may be very welcome or we may later appreciate them as a great good luck. To be really free, we have to overcome the attachment to the survival of the small self. When we get to face this, fear is inevitable. Fear is the guardian of the door to the highest heaven. From that point of view, fear arising is a good omen as long as we do not let it tell us what to do.

ॐ अदृश्याय नमः

om adrśyāya namaḥ

48. Invisible (*Adrshya*) .

As a node of the Moon, we cannot see him. Ketu and Rāhu's position can only be inferred from the orbit of the Moon through mathematics. Ketu, along with Mars rules mathematics and abstract intelligence.

ॐ कालाग्निसन्निभाय नमः

om kālāgnisannibhāya namaḥ

49. Resembling (*Sannibha*) the fire at the end of the world (*Kālāgni*).

Ketu is one of the fire planets along with the Sun and Mars. Here, we are told that his fire is the most intense. If a chart is strongly influenced by both Mars and Ketu, then these are people who will not stop, they keep on and on. This can be very good or very bad depending on how it manifests.

ॐ नृपीडाय नमः

om nrpīḍāya namaḥ

50. Injuring (*Pīḍa*) mankind (*Nr*).

The injury can be in terms of imposing a limit or restriction as well as suffering, annoyance or actual harm. We harm ourselves by forcibly resisting the restriction we feel. Ketu asks us to become more and more subtle in dealing with his challenges. This is the path to eventual mastery of everything. First, one must master oneself. Then one injures neither oneself nor others.

ॐ गृहकारिणे नमः

om grhakāriṇe namaḥ

51. Causing (*Kārin*) householder life (*Grha*).

The sense of this is that during the period of Ketu or under its influence one is more likely to follow a worldly life despite Ketu representing Moksha or liberation. The name could also mean, the creator of the signs of the zodiac. It is said that the zodiac is marked by the position of Rāhu and Ketu at the beginning of the solar system, Ketu being at zero degrees Libra conjunct the brightest star near the zodiac, Spica. This star is used by most Vedic astrologers as the determining factor for the difference between the tropical zodiac, based on the Vernal Equinox point, and the sidereal zodiac, which is fixed with respect to the stars. Spica fixes the zodiac with respect to the stars.

ॐ सर्वोपद्रववारकाय नमः

om sarvopadravavārakāya namaḥ

52. The seat of pain (*Vāraka*) from all (*Sarva*) grievous calamities.

Upadrava includes misfortunes which suddenly arise, national disasters and worse. Ketu indicates sudden, unexpected events. There is a state of consciousness that can be with all this pain without any sense of suffering. I slipped into it once. It was an indescribable blessing

ॐ चित्राप्रसूताय नमः

om citrāprasūtāya namaḥ

53. Born (*Prasūta*) in *Chitrā* Nakshatra.

Chitrā Nakshatra is essentially opposite Ashwini where Rāhu is said to be born (see Ketu 8 and Rāhu 44). Chitra is a dazzling display and Prasūta can mean the primordial essence (*Chitrā* is the feminine form of Chitra). This is illustrative of the subtlest experiences close to pure Oneness.

ॐ अनलाय नमः

om analāya namaḥ

54. The god of fire, Agni or *Anala*.

Mahārishi Parāshara teaches that Ketu is like Mars. This name confirms its fiery tendency. This name refers to all fires, such as the digestive power, and the Nakshatra of Agni, Krittikā, the third Nakshatra. It is also the number 3 and the 50th year in the ancient 60 year Jupiter cycle. Krittikā is distinguished by being where the Moon is exalted and is deeply associated with Moksha, which Ketu signifies. The association with Krittikā gives us the clue that we can also worship Subrahmanyam, the other son of Lord Shiva who was fostered in that Nakshatra (see also Mars 18).

ॐ सर्वव्याधिविनाशकाय नमः

om sarvavyādhivināśakāya namaḥ

55. Completely destroying all diseases (*Sarva Vyādhi*) or removing all tormenting people and things.

Like Gaṇesha, who rules over obstacles and their removal, Ketu can bring disaster and also save us from it. It all depends on our attitude. The primary Vedic remedy involves making offerings into the sacred fire. Agni then mediates for us with the divine powers determining our destiny. Ketu's association with Agni makes him capable of helping us in grave difficulties.

ॐ अपसव्यप्रचारिणे नमः

om apasavyapracāriṇe namaḥ

56. Moving (*Prachārin*) with a retrograde motion (*Apasavya*).

The actual motion of the Moon's nodes is occasionally direct even though the mean motion is retrograde. Traditionally in India, they use the mean positions, which are always retrograde. I have found that works very accurately, better than the true positions. This name can be cited as a reason for using the mean node.

ॐ नवमे पापदायकाय नमः

om navame pāpadāyakāya namaḥ

57. In the ninth (*Navama*) house, Ketu causes (*Dāyaka*) us to commit or experience *Pāpa*.

Pāpa is normally translated as sin but I feel this is too negative. The ninth primarily refers to the ninth house in the Vedic chart. The ninth is the place of our merit based on the kindness and goodness that we bring into this life from the past. Ketu in the ninth may cause unexpected turns in our luck. On occasions, this may prove very fortunate. Any negative effect can be ameliorated or reversed by factors such as the influence of Jupiter.

If Ketu's intensity has the right direction, it can even produce something extraordinary. Amir Khan, the great boxer, has this giving him power and persistence. This placement can give a royal destiny. For example, in the charts of King Edward VIII, Krishna Raja Wadiyar IV, King of Mysore for 46 years, and the Duchess of Cambridge. This is the first of several names (58, 62-64, 72-74) that suggest the difficulties associated with certain placements of Ketu. Rather than simply repeating these mantras, hold them in the heart and see what they have to reveal as impulses of divinity.

ॐ पञ्चमे शोकदाय नमः

om pañcame śokadāya namaḥ

58. In the fifth house (*Pañcama*), Ketu brings (*Da*) grief (*Shoka*).

The resistance towards having children that I have found in some people with this placement suggests some deep seated fear in this area. However, it need not deny children or forebode sorrow. It depends on the association with other *Grahas*.

ॐ उपरागखेचराय नमः

om uparāgakhecarāya namaḥ

59. The eclipse point (*Uparāga*) moving through the zodiac (*Khechara*).

This tells us how clearly the astronomical principles were understood. It also indicates that momentous events can be triggered by the transit of Ketu both for the individual and society.

ॐ अतिपूरुषकर्मणे नमः

om atipūruṣakarmaṇe namaḥ

60. Making (*Karmaṇa*) a person profound.

Atipūruṣa means a first-rate person. It could mean being extraordinary in some way including being highly intuitive. During Ketu's Dashā many extraordinary things may happen, opportunities present themselves and we may spend a lot of time following them. This can be wearing, so we should be careful of our health. If we get too active we may also miss the inner opportunities. The most important time is during the Ketu Rāhu Dashā, when the inner gates of consciousness can open and, like Rāhu Ketu Dashā, this time of change can provide a turning point in our life.

ॐ तुरीये सुखप्रदाय नमः

om turīye sukhapradāya namaḥ

61. In the fourth house (*Turīya*), Ketu brings (*Prada*) happiness (*Sukha*).

This name may come as a big surprise to many. The fourth house is the house of happiness, and we might expect Ketu there to disturb it. The word *Turīya* means fourth and also indicates the fourth state of consciousness, pure being. This is a state of pure bliss and we have seen that Ketu is especially associated with it. If we have Ketu in the fourth and we are not happy, we should look into taking up meditation. The bliss is available, if we can open to it. This could also apply to Ketu in Cancer and conjunct the Moon.

ॐ तृतीये वैरदाय नमः

om tṛtīye vairadāya namaḥ

62. In the third house (*Tṛtīya*), he causes (*Da*) enmity (*Vaira*).

The third is the place of siblings, supporters and servants. In the Western system, servants are seen in the sixth. In Vedic Astrology, the sixth is the place of grief from servants but those who help you are primarily shown by the third while the sixth house shows our service. Acting as an obstacle, Ketu causes enmity with or from such people. This can occur because Ketu also indicates secret enemies and secret dealings.

On the other hand, this might cause us to see Ketu type people as our brothers and sisters and get help from them. Ketu rules spiritual people, mountaineers, dancers, spies and other faceless people, etc.

ॐ पापग्रहाय नमः

om pāpagrahāya namaḥ

63. Causing unconventional acts.

The literal meaning of *Papagraha* is 'A sinful Graha' but Ketu is not intrinsically sinful. The place it stands in the chart can be marked by unconventional acts which might in some case prove unfortunate or inappropriate. This is what gives rise to the enmity. However, if Ketu is well influenced, this may not happen. There can be genius in what occurs.

ॐ स्फोटककारकाय नमः

om sphoṭakakārakāya namaḥ

64. Indicating (*Kāraka*) boils or tumours (*Sphoṭaka*).

As a fiery Graha it can cause boils and as a marker of grievous woes, Ketu as well as Rāhu can mark the seat of cancer. Wherever they sit should be a place to which we give great gentleness. As far as I am aware, each kind of cancer comes from overstressing some part of the body. For example, statistics show that drinking excessive amounts of coffee is associated with throat cancer. Thus, if we have Ketu associated with the second house, which relates to the face, mouth, throat and eating, we should pay attention to our diet.

More positively, this can indicate the energy for breaking out of some situation or difficulty.

ॐ प्राणनाथाय नमः

om prāṇanāthāya namaḥ

65. The lord (*Nātha*) of life.

Prāṇa is the life breath and is related to longevity. Ketu is the end of things and thus is the ultimate lord of life. An implication of this name is that liberation is born of mastery of the breath. Mastery involves attention. In a lecture I attended, the great modern-day Guru Ammachi said "Do not miss a single breath". If one can realize this teaching, one will become *Prāṇanātha*.

ॐ पञ्चमे श्रमकारकाय नमः

om pañcame śramakārakāya namaḥ

66. In the fifth house (*Pañcama*), he indicates (*Kāraka*) the performance of spiritual austerities (*Shrama*).

Since the fifth house is associated with spiritual practices, this is taken as the primary meaning. Shrama can also mean exhaustion. Spiritual practices are to exhaust the ignorance that prevents liberation. In ancient times, people would undertake many difficult and painful penances such as standing on one leg for years. These days people still do penances. Meditation and other Yogic practices are forms of penance. This name can also mean that one has a tendency to hard work.

ॐ द्वितीये स्फुटवाग्दात्रे नमः

om dvitīye sphuṭavāgdātre namaḥ

67. In the house of speech (*Dvitiya*), the second, Ketu gives (*Dātr*) distinct speech (*Sphuṭavāg*).

Ketu in the second house can indicate a special ability when speaking or a strange or unusual way of speaking. In any case, it can be powerful and insightful due to Ketu's ability to penetrate into the depth of anything.

ॐ विषाकुलितवक्त्रकाय नमः

om viṣākulitavaktrakāya namaḥ

68. His speech nullifies the poison (of ignorance).

This is the highest meaning. It can also mean that he starts poisonous confusion. *Visha* is poison, *Akulita* bewildered, perplexed, to make muddy and *Vaktraka* is the mouth or the organ of speech as well as the commencement of something. Either the speech of the person could be confused or perhaps they could say things that confuse others. Ketu rules over people who operate in secrecy like spies. They sometimes get the job of causing poisonous confusion in the enemy camp. Ketu can indicate great lies and great truth. One has to see what the influences are on it are as well as the general tendencies of the person.

ॐ कामरूपिणे नमः

om kāmarūpiṇe namaḥ

69. In the form of the cupid (*Kāma Rūpin*), the energy of desire.

In one text it says that during the Ketu Dashā, a seven year cycle, the person will travel around having intimate relations with beautiful women. Ketu may cause the Kuṇḍalinī Shakti, our most subtle energy source to awaken to some extent and the first effect of this is to put more pressure on the second Chakra. At the same time, it creates some kind of charisma that may attract the opposite gender.

ॐ सिंहदन्ताय नमः

om simhadantāya namaḥ

70. Having lion-like teeth (*Simha Danta*).

This gives the hint that Ketu has exceptional strength in Leo.

ॐ कुशेधमप्रियाय नमः

om kuśedhmapriyāya namaḥ

71. Fond (*Priya*) of *Kusha* grass offerings (*Idhma*) in the sacrificial fire.

The word *Kusha* implies sharpness of awareness. This clarity is what makes the sacrificial process effective. Sacrifice is just a metaphor for all worthy acts.

ॐ चतुर्थे मातृनाशाय नमः

om caturthe mātṛnāśāya namaḥ

72. In the fourth house (*Chaturtha*), he is harmful (*Nāsha*) for the mother (*Mātr*).

Unless nullified by other factors, one may lose one's mother early or she may have to suffer. The suffering may be due to the absence of the child. This position of Ketu may take us away from home.

Previously it was said that Ketu in the fourth house brings happiness. This illustrates

the importance of looking at the words used or there might appear to be a conflict. This name refers to the more mundane level of experience while the previous pointed to the fruit of higher consciousness. The fourth house is a Moksha (liberation) house and the word Turiya used above points at that. By implication, Ketu in any Moksha house, the fourth, eighth or twelfth can ultimately lead to the bliss of liberation.

Astrologers should also look at the position of Ketu in the fourth divisional chart and apply these clues.

ॐ नवमे पितृनाशकाय नमः

om navame pitṛnāśakāya namaḥ

73. In the ninth (*Navama*), he is harmful (*Nāshaka*) to the father (*Pitr*).

This can be compensated by positive factors in the chart. If not, the father may suffer or the paternal heritage may be abandoned. For example, those with visionary or extremist views often break from the established religion and conventions of their forefathers. I have noticed that this placement of Ketu can make some people seers and cause some others to take uncompromising or extreme views. Both kinds of people can come into conflict with the religious and communal authorities as new visions or strong views are rarely welcomed.

Several of these names suggest that wherever Ketu falls, the persons indicated by that house can suffer or they may be very spiritual or unusual. They may take up a profession linked to Ketu. Spirituality is a process of becoming invisible and that is what is indicated, not any random suffering. One should not give way to fear. Ketu's direction is always upward.

ॐ अन्त्ये वैरप्रदाय नमः

om antye vairapradāya namaḥ

74. In the twelfth house or sign (*Antya*), Ketu can cause (*Prada*) heroism or enmity.

Vaira has as its root 'Vi' to separate. This is the basis of hostility. It is also related to Vir, vitality and hence heroism.

Ketu in the twelfth (*Antya*) indicates loss, which can be total loss if Ketu is exactly on the cusp or centre of the house. The cusp in Vedic Astrology is conceptually the same as the cusp in tropical astrology except that in Vedic it is treated as the centre of the house and in tropical astrology it is treated as the start. Total loss can mean enlightenment, or transcending the ego. In the outer world, it can mean falling out with partner, family or friends leading to los-

ing much of one's worldly things.

I once met a man who had such a combination. He was from a very wealthy family and had extensive holdings. As soon as Ketu's Dashā period started, his family rejected him and he was left wandering on the streets of London penniless. He then met a lady who saw him as the next great teacher of mankind and adopted him, so a new life began. He had the unusual habit of giving away all his money at the end of each year. Strangely, when he consulted me, his main concern was how to become wealthy. He lived in two countries so he did not have to pay tax to either of them.

Ketu can produce heroic people both in the ninth and twelfth houses and signs. Heroism is needed to attain Moksha.

ॐ सुतानन्दनिधानकाय नमः

om sutānandanidhānakāya namaḥ

75. Indicating the preservation (*Nidhānaka*) of the joy of children (*Suta Ananda*).

Since Ketu can prevent this joy, he is also responsible for protecting it. This is a reason why he is said to promote the family. Therefore, worshipping the related Devatā, Lord Gaṇeśha, is especially helpful for gaining offspring as well as assuring their health and well-being. This mantra could also be helpful.

ॐ सर्पाक्षिजाताय नमः

om sarpākṣijātāya namaḥ

76. Born (*Jāta*) from the eye of a snake (*Sarpa Akṣi*).

While this name could mean born in the race of snakes – Rāhu and Ketu are considered the head and tail of a snake – this also points to the third eye awakened by the serpent power of Kuṇḍalinī. Ketu, as divine intuition, comes from there, the eye on the forehead of the serpent power. The Vedic literature speaks of a semi-divine class of serpents, the Nāgas, who live under the earth and whose world is illuminated by the jewels on their foreheads. They have special insight and are associated with the constellation Ashleṣā at the end of Cancer. Those with a planet like the Moon there usually have some inner guidance or vision. The nature of this depends on which planet is placed there. If it is Mercury, then the special insights come through the intellect and the speech. They may be brilliant writers.

The jewel is obviously the open third eye associated with the activated pineal gland.

What is born from the third eye is the highest insight. When Ketu is influential in a person's chart then they usually have intuitive gifts. Their third eye may open. Influential primarily means associated with the first house, the Sun or the Moon.

ॐ अनङ्गाय नमः

om anaṅgāya namaḥ

77. Bodiless (*Anaṅga*).

Since he is only an invisible point in the sky, he has no limbs and no body. This name applies to the cupid, the mind and the sky. It is the great power of Cosmic intelligence present everywhere.

ॐ कर्मराश्युद्भावाय नमः

om karmarāśyudbhavāya namaḥ

78. Rising up (*Udbhava*) in the tenth sign or house (*Karma Rāshi*).

The tenth is the place of *Karma* or action. It indicates our career. If Ketu is there, we have to be known for some unusual aspect or approach to our profession or some profession related to the upward direction. It is common in the charts of airline staff like pilots and airhostesses or stewards who have to move in the sky to fulfill their obligations. If Ketu falls in the tenth house or in Capricorn (the tenth sign), it can raise our career to great heights.

ॐ उपान्ते कीर्तिदाय नमः

om upānte kīrtidāya namaḥ

79. In the eleventh house, he gives (*Da*) fame (*Kīrti*). *Upānte* is the one before the last.

ॐ सप्तमे कलहप्रदाय नमः

om saptame kalahapradāya namaḥ

80. In the seventh house (*Saptama*), he gives (*Prada*) conflict (*Kalaha*) or a higher path.

Kalaha can mean deceit or falsehood as well as non-physical violence and abuse. Lord

Gaṇesha should be worshipped to remedy this situation. On the positive side, Kalaha can mean a path or way. Ketu can give us a special kind of direction when placed in the seventh. That path is the path to higher consciousness because Ketu and the seventh house are both associated with the base of the spine and thus the activation of the Kuṇḍalinī energy.

The seventh is the place of marriage and partnership. Ketu tends to block this but at the same time indicates joining with a person or people who are Ketu-like. That can mean they are in the Ketu Dashā, their chart is strongly marked by Ketu and/or they are highly intuitive or gone over the fine line to be somewhat strange or crazy. Examples of a chart being marked by Ketu are that he is in the ascendant or with the Sun, Moon or AtmaKāraka⁴.

ॐ अष्टमे व्याधिकर्त्रे नमः

om aṣṭame vyādhikartre namaḥ

81. In the eighth house (*Aṣṭama*), he causes (*Katr*) suffering (*Vyādhi*).

The eighth house is the place of our errors from the past for which we have to pay in this life. Ketu can indicate some kind of error. In India, especially Kerala, they would say that some abuse of snakes has taken place leaving a curse on us, so they would perform a Pūja to the Nāgas (the celestial serpents). While I was in India, I came across some examples of this. In one case, a colleague was called to a house because the daughter was not getting married. When they asked the reason, he heard in the distance the cry “snake, snake”. He immediately said that some snake had been killed in the house, that this was the problem and advised a Pūja. The family was Christian so rejected this saying that it was not true. For a while, the astrologer insisted that it was true and the father insisted that it was not. Eventually, the wife admitted that such an incident had happened and things had been difficult since then. Finally they did the Pūja, and the daughter subsequently got married.

In the West, we will have difficulty accepting such an idea. We are usually afraid of snakes and do not have any special regard for them. In India, however, snakes are traditionally associated with the practice of Yoga and are said to only bite the sinners. I stayed in an Ashram in Rishikesh of a famous saint and it is said that many years earlier, soon after the ashram was built, the saint and his friend, another local saint, were seen by devotees in a tent filled with cobras. Apparently, it was agreed that no snake would be harmed in the ashram and no human would be bitten by the snakes. Since then, no case of any snakebite occurred.

I was in charge of a group of young Indians who came there for training and who were unaware of this tradition. One day I came to the hall for the meeting and found that there had been a cobra in the entrance porch. The sweeper who had to clean the porch had picked up

the cobra and swept under it and then put it down (it is true). However, when the students came they killed it. I was very upset and gave them strong advice against such behaviour. The next day, when I came there, there was a small cobra on the steps leading up to where I sat. We suspected they had a nest under the stage. I called the staff and the snake was gently removed.

I myself have seen cases where large snakes have appeared apparently to give their Darshan (or visual blessing) when some act of sanctity has occurred. We humans used to have a deep connection with the animal and vegetable kingdom; many still do. We slaughter hundreds of thousands of dolphins every year, yet we hear no cases of retaliation, rather there are many cases of people being saved from sharks by dolphins. There is a group of divers who dive off Durban, South Africa, in the place where the sharks congregate. They are often swimming with hundreds of sharks. They have a policy of taking nothing at all from the ocean and they have never been bothered by the sharks. Those who go spear fishing, however, are attacked from time to time.

The destruction of the eco-system by our greed and carelessness cannot go forever without consequence. As James Lovelock, who developed the Gaia theory, said, Nature will eventually act to restore balance⁵. In the *Bible* and other scriptures we see that if many sin and a few in that population are holy, then the place will be spared. Everywhere I go I find a sprinkling of truly holy people; I believe that this, alone, has saved us so far. We should consider that there may come a time when God tells his own to leave that place and not look back!

I feel especially grieved by the wanton destruction of the oceans. Some think they are so large that they cannot be destroyed by human exploitation but research shows 80% of the fish and mammals in the ocean have already been taken. Scientists have found that when the population of a fish species is about to collapse, they tend to congregate together. When the government, on scientific advice, wants to impose quotas, the fishermen say that the catches are good and there is no shortage. When the fish group together, they are easy for us to find with our all-powerful technology. It looks like there are plenty of fish and then suddenly there are none.

Our addictions to certain foods and food additives make us need a massive supply of cheap beef. This is being supplied by non-sustainable agriculture based on cutting down the rainforests as well as vast feedlots that are causing terrible pollution problems. It is fortunate that there is a growing number of farmers who care for their animals and land and produce food responsibly, almost always organically. Two farms in the UK with similar numbers of cattle were compared. The organic one had a vet bill of about \$1,000/year. The other spent around \$100,000/year.

There is plenty of literature on all this so it is not necessary to repeat it but if we, as a species, want to survive with a little of our civilization intact, we had better wake up and wake up fast. Politicians fail because they are controlled by certain vested interests who are taking a very short-term view. We all have to take responsibility for our collective destiny.

ॐ धने बहुसुखप्रदाय नमः

om dhane bahusukhapradāya namaḥ

82. In the second house (*Dhana*), he gives many forms of happiness (*Bahu Sukha*).

When I mentioned this name to leading Jyotishis in India they objected but I have seen that it is true. It applies in my chart and I just passed through the major cycle of Ketu. Objectors may say that there is a strong benefic influence on Ketu in my chart and I accept that. However, the meaning of the name is clear. Since the word *Dhana* is used, in the locative, meaning in the house of wealth, this position can give monetary benefits.

ॐ जनने रोगदाय नमः

om janane rogadāya namaḥ

83. In the first house, he causes disease (*Roga*).

Janana indicates coming into existence, which is the role of the first house. Ketu rules over the opposite process, the end of things, so it may give health issues especially in childhood. There may be some back pains that trouble from time to time.

ॐ उर्ध्वमूर्धजाय नमः

om urdhvamūrdhajāya namaḥ

84. The hair on his head (*Mūrdhaja*) is erect (*Urdhva*).

This phenomenon occurs when the Kuṇḍalinī Shakti rises. The hair bristles or stands erect. The name indicates this highly empowered spiritual condition, a state of ecstasy.

ॐ ग्रहनायकाय नमः

om grahanāyakāya namaḥ

85. The leader (*Nāyaka*) amongst the *Grahas*.

This means that no other Graha can overrule him. If he indicates a particular effect, other planets can influence but not totally prevent the outcome. In this way, he is like Gaṇesha who is always worshipped first, for without his help, no other worship can be successful.

Alternatively, it means that he indicates leaders. I have observed this to be true. A strong Ketu makes someone very insightful and thus skillful in formulating policies. They may lead from behind or in-front depending on other factors. Ketu's nature to be faceless coupled with this may be the archetypal fuel for the popular belief that society is being managed by people whose faces are never seen in the halls of government.

ॐ पापदृष्टये नमः

om pāpadṛṣṭaye namaḥ

86. His aspect (*Dṛṣṭa*) brings trouble.

Pāpa is sin, that is selfish heedless acts. Under the aspect of Ketu, we may lose our clarity of mind and make mistakes or even do wrong things. Ketu's aspect makes us feel like we are being destroyed. This activates the most primal response of self-preservation. Virtually any act, even if normally considered wrong, becomes an option in this situation. However, if we bear with our crucifixion, we will rise again in glory without the stain of sin.

Some great astrologers argue that as Ketu is headless, he cannot have aspects, no eyes equals no vision. Another reason is that planetary aspects are indicative of desire, while Ketu, as the Moksha Kāraka, has no desire. He may excite desire but he himself has none. However, the signs have aspects and thus Ketu aspects all the signs aspected by its sign and thus also the planets in them. For example, if Ketu is in Aries, it aspects Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius and their planets. Being in the same sign also counts as an aspect.

Ketu lost his head but, according to the Vedic stories, it was replaced by that of an elephant (as well as several other animal heads in different versions). The elephant head immediately reminds us of Lord Gaṇesha who is already identified with Ketu. The truth is that whatever planet is most strongly influencing Ketu provides the head. If it is with a strong Jupiter (indicating the elephant), then there will be wisdom, not sin.

ॐ खेचराय नमः

om khecarāya namaḥ

87. Moving (*Chara*) through the sky or firmament (*Khe*).

Previously (Ketu 78), it was explained how Ketu can represent people who work in the skies, like aircrew. Khecharī Mudrā is a special Yogic exercise or state that is described as 'the stance of moving or flying through the void of the supreme consciousness' (*Tantraloka*, Muller-Ortega, p. 350).

ॐ शम्भवाय नमः

om śāmbhavāya namaḥ

88. Related to or devoted to Lord Shiva, *Shambhu* (*Shāmbhava*).

This name identifies Ketu with the absolute power. It also occurs under Rāhu (97) and indicates the one who is always awake, always kind, granting happiness and who brings all things eventually to rest or fulfilment. It means Ketu arises from Him and is devoted to Him. Thus Ketu will protect other devotees. This mantra can be an excellent remedy for mental agitation.

ॐ अशेषपूजिताय नमः

om aśeṣapūjitāya namaḥ

89. Worshipped (*Pūjita*) by everyone (*Aśeṣa*).

This name can also mean that he is worshipped by those who are free from defect, perfectly clean in their consciousness. Real worship means continuously giving attention, and that occurs when the self identifies with the Self. Attention can only be continuous by the apparent two merging into One. This is the state he signifies and this is his worship.

ॐ शाश्वताय नमः

om śāśvatāya namaḥ

90. Eternal (*Shashvata*).

This appears under Rāhu (94) but the implication is different. While Rāhu mainly represents the endless process of change, Ketu represents the eternity of non-change. They are the two sides of the Cosmic coin.

ॐ नटाय नमः

om naṭāya namaḥ

91. An actor, dancer or mime artist (*Naṭa*).

Above we saw that Ketu can excite the energy of desire. This makes him a fascinating performer.

ॐ शुभाशुभफलप्रदाय नमः

om śubhāśubhaphalaprādāya namaḥ

92. Giving (*Prada*) both auspicious (*Shubha*) and inauspicious (*Ashubha*) results (*Phala*).

This makes it difficult to predict the outcome of his Dashā. Before I started Ketu Dashā, I travelled around India asking astrologers what would happen during this seven-year cycle. I got almost no answers. However, I experienced many of the things indicated in these names including improved comforts and wealth and profound inner awakening as well as intensity, wearing down of the body and a lot of pressure.

ॐ धूम्राय नमः

om dhūmrāya namaḥ

93. Smoky coloured.

Dhūmra can mean smoke coloured, grey, dark red, purple, dark or smoky. Under his influence, we can gain absolute inner clarity but often our ordinary vision is clouded. *Dhūmra* can refer to hidden things, so Ketu can indicate acts done in secrecy. When Ketu influences our personality, we can become very private or just feel hidden.

This is a little hint that Ketu is associated with the Goddess Dhūmāvatī.

A stone for Ketu is smoky quartz. I have had very good experiences with it though that likely was enhanced by the blessings of the Brāhmin who gave it to me.

ॐ सुधापायिने नमः

om sudhāpāyine namaḥ

94. Drinking (*Pāyin*) the nectar of immortality (*Sudhā*).

Those who know the ultimate reality attain immortality of consciousness that is never lost whatever happens to the body. While in the body, it is nourished by an inner nectar flow, the flow of Soma.

ॐ अजिताय नमः

om ajitāya namaḥ

95. Invincible (*Ajita*).

There is no hope in fighting with him. The next name clearly tells us how to be with him.

ॐ भक्तवत्सलाय नमः

om bhaktavatsalāya namaḥ

96. Affectionate (*Vatsala*) for the devotees (*Bhakta*) like a cow for its calf.

This makes clear that those who approach Ketu with respect and humbleness will obtain his grace and will not have to suffer from all the terrible things that have been mentioned.

ॐ सिंहासनाय नमः

om simhāsanāya namaḥ

97. Seated on a lion (*Simha*).

This is the mark of royalty. The lion seat or throne (*Simhāsana*) indicates the power over life and death. At the finest level of creation is a roar, which is likened to the roar of a lion. It is the primordial sound. That is the place where he sits and that is where the consciousness of the wise sits.

ॐ केतुमूर्तये नमः

om ketumūrtaye namaḥ

98. Whose form (*Mūrti*) is *Ketu*. This indicates to us that it is the Supreme Lord who takes this form to bless or punish the world.

ॐ रवीन्दुद्युतिनाशकाय नमः

om ravīndudyutināśakāya namaḥ

99. Blotting out (*Nāshaka*) the light (*Dyuti*) of the Sun (*Ravi*) and the Moon (*Indu*).

Obviously, this refers to eclipses but we should also look at conjunctions between the luminaries and Ketu even when an actual eclipse is not taking place. The Sun with Ketu means the ego feels eclipsed but this conjunction can open the egoless state of consciousness. The Moon with Ketu can make life feel devoid of happiness but it can also give profound inner experiences. For example, mental experiences like visions.

ॐ अमराय नमः

om amarāya namaḥ

100. Immortal. Divine.

Amara is also the number 33 because there are said to be 33 crores of gods (1 crore is 10 million). 'Gods' are the individual expressions of the laws of nature. 33 is 3 x 11. Three indicates the house of desire and 11 the house of fulfilment of the desire. On the level of the gods, there is almost no gap between a desire and its fulfilment. Ketu facilitates human awareness reaching that level and beyond.

ॐ पीडकाय नमः

om pīḍakāya namaḥ

101. An oppressor (*Pīḍaka*).

His function is to crush everything down until it becomes so fine that it can fathom the truth.

ॐ अमर्त्याय नमः

om amartyāya namaḥ

102. Undying (*Amartya*). Without death.

That which remains after his crushing process is beyond the range of death.

ॐ विष्णुदृष्टाय नमः

om viṣṇudrṣṭāya namaḥ

103. He received the Darshan (vision, *Drṣṭa*) of the Lord (*Viṣṇu*).

This occurred when the demon tried to steal the nectar and was decapitated creating Ketu and Rāhu as explained elsewhere (Rāhu 4).

ॐ असुरेश्वराय नमः

om asureśvarāya namaḥ

104. The ruler or chief (*Ishvara*) of those not drinking the nectar. *Asura* is sometimes translated as demon(s).

While Shukra (Venus) is Guru of the demons, he is the king. Asura, as an archetype, means those who are fully identified with the body and do not know the infinite nature of the soul. Because they cannot resist him, he can be considered their lord. For those of us seeking to know the Self, he can help us if we give him the respect due to a king.

ॐ भक्तरक्षाय नमः

om bhaktarakṣāya namaḥ

105. The protector (*Rakṣa*) of the devotees (*Bhakta*).

This name also appears under Rāhu and shows that the most terrific karmic forces in nature are still under the control of a pure heart. If we face our fears with simplicity and humility, then that power from which the fear emanates will protect us.

The universe is a very violent place. Mankind can be wiped off this planet without any notice by some routine cosmic event like a supernova in our corner of the galaxy. Probably, there are many other events that could cause this. However, the ancient seers found that

within their own human consciousness they could traverse the vastness of space and could even encompass it all. They knew that which could not die, which lies within every one of us.

One of the greatest Vedic texts is the *Yoga Vasiṣṭha* (Parimal Publications, Delhi). This contains many statements that indicate the remarkable level of knowledge of the ancient Rishis. For example,

'There is no counting of the atoms proceeding from the spirit and forming the three worlds both before and after the birth of the glorious Sun.' 2.3.4

Where else in human history do we find people talking about the universe **before** the creation of the Sun?

'There is nobody who can count the millions of orbs which at present form the three worlds.' 2.3.5

Note that the Ancient Greeks identified just over 1,000 stars.

'These orbs of light in the heaven, though they appear to be placed so near to us, are yet millions of leagues apart...' *'All bodies are formed by the combinations of atoms...'* 3.27.27, 29

In the story of Queen Līlā and the Goddess Saraswatī, Saraswatī takes Līlā on a tour of outer space. Having gone very far, Līlā comments,

'Oh, the great distance we have come to, whence the great luminary of the Sun also, appears as small as an atom below.' 3.29.50

The Goddess replies,

'This is the great pole of the universe, which is scattered over with innumerable nebular stars...' 3.29.52

It should be noted that our great civilization has never obtained a photo from a sufficient distance from the Sun that it is just a dot. Viking's last photo had the Earth as 0.12 of a pixel, but the Sun was still quite large.

ॐ वैचित्‍यकपोतस्यन्दनाय नमः

om vaicitryakapotasyandanāya namaḥ

106. Riding (Syandana) on a wonderfully coloured pigeon (Vaichitrya Kapota).

The pigeon or dove is his vehicle and, naturally, it is remarkable in diverse ways. Pigeons were considered portentous by the ancients.

ॐ विचित्रफलदायिने नमः

om vicitraphaladāyine namaḥ

107. Giving amazing and unexpected results (*Vichitra Phala*).

ॐ भक्ताभीष्टफलप्रदाय नमः

om bhaktābhīṣṭaphalapradāya namaḥ

108. Blessing the devotees (*Bhakta*) with the fulfilment (fruit, *Phala*) of their desires (*Abhīṣṭa*).

This is such a beautiful last name. One might expect that since Ketu is last and he seems so terrible that all would end in gloom. Fortunately, the ancients have left us with a great promise. If we live in goodness and purity to the best of our ability, nothing is beyond our reach, even the ultimate Truth, the ocean of bliss.

ॐ तत् सत्

Om tat sat

THE MANTRAS OF KETU IN TRANSLITERATION

1. om ketave namaḥ
2. om sthūlaśirase namaḥ
3. om śiromātrāya namaḥ
4. om dhvajākṛtaye namaḥ
5. om navagrahayutāya namaḥ
6. om simhikā'surīgarbhasambhavāya namaḥ
7. om mahābhīṭikarāya namaḥ
8. om citravarṇāya namaḥ
9. om śrīpiṅgalākṣakāya namaḥ
10. om phulladhūmasakāśāya namaḥ
11. om tikṣṇadamṣṭrāya namaḥ
12. om mahodarāya namaḥ
13. om raktanetrāya namaḥ
14. om citrakāriṇe namaḥ
15. om tivrakopāya namaḥ
16. om mahāsurāya namaḥ
17. om krūrakaṇṭhāya namaḥ
18. om krodhanidhaye namaḥ
19. om chāyāgrahaviśeṣakāya namaḥ
20. om antyagrahāya namaḥ
21. om mahāśīrṣāya namaḥ
22. om sūryāraye namaḥ
23. om puṣpavadgrahine namaḥ
24. om varahastāya namaḥ
25. om gadāpāṇaye namaḥ
26. om citravastradharāya namaḥ
27. om citradhvajapatākāya namaḥ
28. om ghorāya namaḥ
29. om citrarathāya namaḥ
30. om śikhine namaḥ
31. om kulutthabhakṣakāya namaḥ
32. om vaidūryābharaṇāya namaḥ
33. om utpātajanakāya namaḥ
34. om śukramitrāya namaḥ
35. om mandasakhāya namaḥ

36. om gadādhārāya namaḥ
37. om nākapataye namaḥ
38. om antarvedīśvarāya namaḥ
39. om jaiminigoṭrajāya namaḥ
40. om citraguptātmane namaḥ
41. om dakṣiṇāmukhāya namaḥ
42. om mukundavarapātrāya namaḥ
43. om mahāsurakulodbhavāya namaḥ
44. om ghanavarṇāya namaḥ
45. om lambadevāya namaḥ
46. om mṛtyuputrāya namaḥ
47. om utpātarūpadhāriṇe namaḥ
48. om adṛśyāya namaḥ
49. om kālāgnisannibhāya namaḥ
50. om nṛpīdāya namaḥ
51. om gṛhakāriṇe namaḥ
52. om sarvopadravavārakāya namaḥ
53. om citrāprasūtāya namaḥ
54. om analāya namaḥ
55. om sarvavyādhivināśakāya namaḥ
56. om apasavyapracāriṇe namaḥ
57. om navame pāpadāyakāya namaḥ
58. om pañcame śokadāya namaḥ
59. om uparāgakhecarāya namaḥ
60. om atipūruṣakarmaṇe namaḥ
61. om turīye sukhapradāya namaḥ
62. om tṛtīye vairadāya namaḥ
63. om pāpagrahāya namaḥ
64. om sphoṭakakārakāya namaḥ
65. om prāṇanāthāya namaḥ
66. om pañcame śramakārakāya namaḥ
67. om dvitīye sphuṭavāgdātṛe namaḥ
68. om viśākulitavaktrakāya namaḥ
69. om kāmārūpiṇe namaḥ
70. om simhadantāya namaḥ
71. om kuśedhmapriyāya namaḥ
72. om caturthe mātṛnāśāya namaḥ
73. om navame piṭṛnāśakāya namaḥ

74. om antye vairapradāya namaḥ
75. om sutānandanidhānakāya namaḥ
76. om sarpākṣijātāya namaḥ
77. om anaṅgāya namaḥ
78. om karmarāśyudbhavāya namaḥ
79. om upānte kīrtidāya namaḥ
80. om saptame kalahapradāya namaḥ
81. om aṣṭame vyādhikartre namaḥ
82. om dhane bahuśukhapradāya namaḥ
83. om janane rogaḍāya namaḥ
84. om urdhvamūrdhajāya namaḥ
85. om grahanāyakāya namaḥ
86. om pāpadṛṣṭaye namaḥ
87. om khecarāya namaḥ
88. om śāmbhavāya namaḥ
89. om aśeṣapūjitāya namaḥ
90. om śāśvatāya namaḥ
91. om naṭāya namaḥ
92. om śubhāśubhaphalapradāya namaḥ
93. om dhūmrāya namaḥ
94. om sudhāpāyine namaḥ
95. om ajiṭāya namaḥ
96. om bhaktavatsalāya namaḥ
97. om simhāsanāya namaḥ
98. om ketumūrtaye namaḥ
99. om ravīndudyutināśakāya namaḥ
100. om amarāya namaḥ
101. om pīḍakāya namaḥ
102. om amartyāya namaḥ
103. om viṣṇudṛṣṭāya namaḥ
104. om asureśvarāya namaḥ
105. om bhaktarakṣāya namaḥ
106. om vaicitryakapotasyandanāya namaḥ
107. om vicitraphaladāyine namaḥ
108. om bhaktābhīṣṭaphalapradāya namaḥ

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While these lists are well known to traditional astrologers in India, I only found two places where they had been printed. I am thus indebted to Dr Mrs Saraswathy and Prof. B. A. Eeswaran for publishing a Sanskrit text of the names of the Grahas in their book *NavaGrahas*, albeit without translation and source, and Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao for his outstanding compendium *The NavaGraha Kosha*, which includes another set. Prof. Rao informed me that his work was based on a medieval text. Regretfully Prof. Rao has passed away. These two sources have some differences. Where I felt that both versions of a name had merit, I included both under the same number.

I am most grateful to Pandit UmaShankar Jois, priest of the Mukambika temple, Kollur, Karnataka, India, for his help in the early stages of this work. Regretfully, he has now passed away. Many other pundits gave me their learned opinion on particular names and I thank them all. My Jyotish Guru, Pandit Sanjay Rath, has been a great inspiration.

Two great artists have kindly allowed me to showcase their beautiful work. Pieter Weltevrede, acclaimed Dutch master painter, did all the colour work. The drawings were done by the highly talented Jane Adams. Find out more about them in the Section 'The Artists'.

Many people helped me with editing and proofreading and I thank them all. Especially, I want to thank my wife Susie for her considerable assistance and all my family for their love and support.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Foss has a PhD in Computing Science from the University of Alberta and is also an Oxford University Physics graduate with publications in Nature and other leading scientific journals. He is the author of the book *High-Dimensional Data Mining*. He enjoys a deep love of music, art and poetry and has more than 30 years experience studying and teaching the Vedic wisdom around the world. He is the Founding President of the British Association of Vedic Astrology, Editor of the BAVA Journal *Gochara* and is a Certified Jaimini Scholar and Jyotish Pandit, the highest professional certifications in Vedic Astrology involving nine years of continuous study. He has developed the unique, easy and powerful software **Shri Jyoti Star** that has become the first choice amongst the leading Vedic Astrologers around the world. Andrew is married and lives with his family in Virginia, USA.

SECRETS OF VIMSHOTTARI DASHĀ

As a bonus I have decided to publish some unique secrets about Vedic Astrology in the printed version of this book, which will also have the mantras of all nine planets. Please visit YogaOfThePlanets.com for more information.

For 33 years, I, like everyone else who studies Jyotisha, wondered about the origin of the lengths of the Vimshottari Dashās. I could never find a way into this mystery. Nowhere in the literature, ancient or modern, can even a satisfactory hint be found. Then, on July 7, 2015, I saw on the web at least a partial derivation of the sequence of lords. It relied on knowing the Dashā cycle lengths. At the end, the author appealed for someone to find a solution to the problem of deriving the length of the cycles. The thought came, 'let's give it a shot'.

I pulled out a fresh sheet of paper and started writing down equations that might help. Bit by bit the key principles unfolded themselves. It did not take long to realize that I had an answer and it just required some polishing. In the process, some wonderful insights appeared as well as a profound advance in the understanding of the Tāra Bala, which is most important for interpreting the Dashā. I have not found this written anywhere. Therefore, both these re-markable and interesting secrets were given to me and I am sharing them with you.

Notes

Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali. Trans. P.N. Mukerji, Univ. Of Calcutta, 1977.

Each Nakshatra or lunar mansion has a planetary ruler used in astrological calculations as well as a Vedic deity.

The AtmaKāraka is the soul planet. It is the Graha that has advanced furthest in its zodiacal sign. Rahu is naturally retrograde, so it is an exception being measured from the end of the sign. Ketu is not considered as it represents the freedom of the soul, not its embodiment.